

NOTES

First Record of the Masked Booby (Aves, Sulidae: *Sula dactylatra*) for Thailand

During a fish collecting expedition to southern Thailand, I discovered a Masked Booby, *Sula dactylatra*, which was being kept in captivity by a trawler fisherman in Pattani on 23 October 1983. The fisherman reported that he had seen more than 10 boobies sitting on the water approximately 20 km off the coast between Narathiwat and the Malaysian Province of Kelantan around 20 October 1983. He further mentioned that some birds were blackish-brown (possibly Brown Boobies, *S. leucogaster*, or even frigatebirds, *Fregata* spp.) although the only bird that he managed to catch was a white individual.

This captive bird was immediately identifiable as an adult Masked Booby by its black flight feathers of wings and tail, white body covert feathers, white head and black face mask. The feet were dark grey and the bill pale yellowish. The bird was photographed (cover photograph). The only other predominantly white sulids having an entirely black tail are the Cape Gannet, *S. capensis*, of African waters, which has a creamy yellow head and less black on the secondaries, and the Galapagos form of the white morph of the Red-footed Booby, *S. sula*, which has red to yellow feet (HARRISON, 1983).

The Masked Booby ranges throughout tropical oceans and has been recorded from NW Malaysian waters, where a few birds occasionally visit the Brown Booby colony on Pulau Perak (MEDWAY & WELLS, 1976). The only booby hitherto recorded for Thailand is the Brown Booby, the status of which is uncertain (LEKAGUL & CRONIN, 1974). Owing to the depredations of fishermen who continue to collect eggs and young for food (WELLS, 1975, 1982), populations of nesting boobies in southeast Asian waters have been greatly reduced and, in some cases, probably extirpated.

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